# DRAMAS IN MINIATURE

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MATHILDE BLIND

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# DRAMAS IN MINIATURE

"The perfume of the breath of May
Had passed into her soul."

p. 25.

# DRAMAS IN MINIATURE

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BY

MATHILDE BLIND

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY FORD MADOX BROWN

London
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# DRAMAS IN MINIATURE.

## *THE RUSSIAN STUDENT'S TALE.*

THE midnight sun with phantom glare
Shone on the soundless thoroughfare
Whose shuttered houses, closed and still,
Seemed bodies without heart or will ;
Yea, all the stony city lay
Impassive in that phantom day,
As amid livid wastes of sand
The sphinxes of the desert stand.

*  *  *  *  *

And we, we two, turned night to day,
As, whistling many a student's lay,
We sped along each ghostly street,
With girls whose lightly tripping feet

Well matched our longer, stronger stride,
In hurrying to the water-side.
We took a boat; each seized an oar,
And put his will into each stroke,
Until on either hand the shore
Slipped backwards, as our voices woke
Far echoes, mingling like a dream
With swirl and tumult of the stream.
On—on—away, beneath the ray
Of midnight in the mask of day;
By great wharves where the masts at peace
Look like the ocean's barren trees;
Past palaces and glimmering towers,
And gardens fairy-like with flowers,
And parks of twilight green and closes,
The very Paradise of roses.
The waters flow; on, on we row,
Now laughing loud, now whispering low;
And through the splendour of the white
Electrically glowing night,

Wind-wafted from some perfumed dell,
Tumultuously there loudly rose
Above the Neva's surge and swell,
With amorous ecstasies and throes,
And lyric spasms of wildest wail,
The love-song of a nightingale.

* * * * *

I see her still beside me. Yea,
As if it were but yesterday,
I see her—see her as she smiled;
Her face that of a little child
For innocent sweetness undefiled;
And that pathetic flower-like blue
Of eyes which, as they looked at you,
Seemed yet to stab your bosom through.
I rowed, she steered; oars dipped and flashed,
The broadening river roared and splashed,
So that we hardly seemed to hear
Our comrades' voices, though so near;
Their faces seeming far away,

As still beneath that phantom day
I looked at her, she smiled at me!
And then we landed—I and she.

* * * * *

There's an old Café in the wood;
A students' haunt on summer eves,
Round which responsive poplar leaves
Quiver to each æolian mood
Like some wild harp a poet smites
On visionary summer nights.
I ordered supper, took a room
Green-curtained by the tremulous gloom
Of those fraternal poplar trees
Shaking together in the breeze;
My pulse, too, like a poplar tree,
Shook wildly as she smiled at me.
Eye in eye, and hand in hand,
Awake amid the slumberous land,
I told her all my love that night—
How I had loved her at first sight;

How I was hers, and seemed to be
Her own to all eternity.
And through the splendour of the white
Electrically glowing night,
Wind-wafted from some perfumed dell,
Tumultuously there loudly rose
Above the Neva's surge and swell,
With amorous ecstasies and throes,
And lyric spasms of wildest wail,
The love-song of a nightingale.

* * * * *

I see her still beside me. Yea,
As if it were but yesterday,
I hear her tell with cheek aflame
Her ineradicable shame—
So sweet a flower in such vile hands!
Oh, loved and lost beyond recall!
Like one who hardly understands,
I heard the story of her fall.
The odious barter of her youth,

Of beauty, innocence, and truth,
Of all that honest women hold
Most sacred—for the sake of gold.
A weary seampstress, half a child,
Left unprotected in the street,
Where, when so hungry, you would meet
All sorts of tempters that beguiled.
Oh, infamous and senseless clods,
Basely to taint so pure a heart,
And make a maid fit for the gods
A creature of the common mart!
She spoke quite simply of things vile—
Of devils with an angel's face;
It seemed the sunshine of her smile
Must purify the foulest place.
She told me all—she would be true—
Told me of things too sad, too bad;
And, looking in her eyes' clear blue
My passion nearly drove me mad!
I tried to speak, but tried in vain;

A sob rose to my throat as dry
As ashes—for between us twain
A murdered virgin seemed to lie.
And through the splendour of the white
Electrically glowing night,
Wind-wafted from some perfumed dell,
Tumultuously there loudly rose
Above the Neva's surge and swell,
With amorous ecstasies and throes,
And lyric spasms of wildest wail,
The love-song of a nightingale.

* * * * *

Poor craven creature! What was I,
To sit in judgment on her life,
Who dared not make this child my wife,
And lift her up to love's own sky?
This poor lost child we all—yes, all—
Had helped to hurry to her fall,
Making a social leper of
God's creature consecrate to love.

I looked at her—she smiled no more;
She understood it all before
A syllable had passed my lips;
And like a horrible eclipse,
Which blots the sunlight from the skies,
A blankness overspread her eyes—
The blankness as of one who dies.
I knew how much she loved me—knew
How pure and passionately true
Her love for me, which made her tell
What scorched her like the flames of hell.
And I, I loved her too, so much,
So dearly, that I dared not touch
Her lips that had been kissed in sin;
But with a reverential thrill
I took her work-worn hand and thin,
And kissed her fingers, showing still
Where needle-pricks had marred the skin.
And, ere I knew, a hot tear fell,
Scalding the place which I had kissed,

As between clenching teeth I hissed
Our irretrievable farewell.
And through the smouldering glow of night,
Mixed with the shining morning light
Wind-wafted from some perfumed dell,
Above the Neva's surge and swell,
With lyric spasms, as from a throat
Which dying breathes a faltering note,
There faded o'er the silent vale
The last sob of a nightingale.

## THE MYSTIC'S VISION.

I.

AH! I shall kill myself with dreams!
  These dreams that softly lap me round
Through trance-like hours, in which, meseems,
  That I am swallowed up and drowned;
Drowned in your love which flows o'er me
As o'er the seaweed flows the sea.

II.

In watches of the middle night,
  'Twixt vesper and 'twixt matin bell,
With rigid arms and straining sight,
  I wait within my narrow cell;
With muttered prayers, suspended will,
I wait your advent—statue-still.

III.

Across the Convent garden walls
  The wind blows from the silver seas ;
Black shadow of the cypress falls
  Between the moon-meshed olive trees ;
Sleep-walking from their golden bowers,
Flit disembodied orange flowers.

IV.

And in God's consecrated house,
  All motionless from head to feet,
My heart awaits her heavenly Spouse,
  As white I lie on my white sheet ;
With body lulled and soul awake,
I watch in anguish for your sake.

V.

And suddenly, across the gloom,
  The naked moonlight sharply swings ;

A Presence stirs within the room,
  A breath of flowers and hovering wings:
Your Presence without form and void,
Beyond all earthly joys enjoyed.

VI.

My heart is hushed, my tongue is mute,
  My life is centred in your will;
You play upon me like a lute
  Which answers to its master's skill,
Till passionately vibrating,
Each nerve becomes a throbbing string.

VII.

Oh, incommunicably sweet!
  No longer aching and apart,
As rain upon the tender wheat,
  You pour upon my thirsty heart;
As scent is bound up in the rose,
Your love within my bosom glows.

VIII.

Unseen, untouched, unheard, unknown,
  You take possession of your bride;
I lose myself to live alone
  In you, who once were crucified
For me, that now would die in you,
As in the sun a drop of dew.

IX.

Fish may not perish in the deep,
  Nor sparrows fall through yielding air,
Pure gold in hottest flame will keep;
  How should I fail and falter where
You are, O Lord, in whose control
For ever lies my living soul?

X.

Ay, break through every wall of sense,
  And pierce my flesh as nails did pierce

Your bleeding limbs in anguish tense,
  And torture me with bliss so fierce,
That self dies out, as die it must,
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

XI.

Thus let me die, so loved and lost,
  Annihilated in my dreams!
Nor force me, an unwilling ghost,
  To face the loud day's brutal beams;
The noisy world's inanities,
All vanity of vanities.

## *THE MESSAGE.*

FROM side to side the sufferer tossed
  With quick impatient sighs;
Her face was bitten as by frost,
The look as of one hunted crossed
  The fever of her eyes.

All seared she seemed with life and woe,
  Yet scarcely could have told
More than a score of springs or so;
Her hair had girlhood's morning glow,
  And yet her mouth looked old.

Not long for her the sun would rise,
  Nor that young slip of moon,



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Wading through London's smoky skies,
Would dwindling meet those dwindling eyes,
  Ere May was merged in June.

May was it somewhere? Who, alas!
  Could fancy it was May?
For here, instead of meadow grass,
You saw, through naked panes of glass,
  Bare walls of whitish gray.

Instead of songs, where in the quick
  Leaves hide the blackbirds' nests,
You heard the moaning of the sick,
And tortured breathings harsh and thick
  Drawn from their labouring chests.

She muttered, "What's the odds to me?"
  With an old cynic's sneer;
And looking up, cried mockingly,
"I hate you, nurse! Why, can't you see
  You'll make no convert here?"

And then she shook her fist at Heaven,
  And broke into a laugh!
Yes, though her sins were seven times seven,
Let others pray to be forgiven—
  She scorned such canting chaff.

Oh, it was dreadful, sir! Far worse
  In one so young and fair;
Sometimes she'd scoff and swear and curse;
Call me bad names, and vow each nurse
  A fool for being there.

And then she'd fall back on her bed,
  And many a weary hour
Would lie as rigid as one dead;
Her white throat with the golden head
  Like some torn lily flower.

We could do nothing, one and all
  How much we might beseech;

Her girlish blood had turned to gall:
Far lower than her body's fall
  Her soul had sunk from reach.

Her soul had sunk into a slough
  Of evil past repair.
The world had been against her; now
Nothing in heaven or earth should bow
  Her stubborn knees in prayer.

Yet I felt sorry all the same,
  And sometimes, when she slept,
With head and hands as hot as flame,
I watched beside her, half in shame,
  Smoothed her bright hair and wept.

To die like this—'twas awful, sir!
  To know I prayed in vain;
And hear her mock me, and aver
That if her life came back to her
  She'd live her life again.

Was she a wicked girl? What then?
  She didn't care a pin!
She was not worse than all those men
Who looked so shocked in public, when
  They made and shared her sin.

"Shut up, nurse, do! Your sermons pall;
  Why can't you let me be?
Instead of worrying o'er my fall,
I wish, just wish, you sisters all
  Turned to the likes of me."

I shuddered! I could bear no more,
  And left her to her fate;
She was too cankered at the core;
Her heart was like a bolted door,
  Where Love had knocked too late.

I left her in her savage spleen,
  And hoarsely heard her shout,

"What does the cursed sunlight mean
By shining in upon this scene?
  Oh, shut the sunlight out!"

Sighing, I went my round once more,
  Full heavy for her sin;
Just as Big Ben was striking four,
The sun streamed through the open door,
  As a young girl came in.

She held a basket full of flowers—
  Cowslip and columbine;
A lilac bunch from rustic bowers,
Strong-scented after morning showers,
  Smelt like some cordial wine.

There, too, peeped Robin-in-the-hedge,
  There daisies pearled with dew,
Wild parsley from the meadow's edge,
Sweet-william and the purple vetch,
  And hyacinth's heavenly blue.

But best of all the spring's array,
  Green boughs of milk-white thorn ;
Their petals on each perfumed spray
Looked like the wedding gift of May
  On nature's marriage morn.

And she who bore those gifts of grace
  To our poor patients there,
Passed like a sunbeam through the place :
Dull eyes grew brighter for her face,
  Angelically fair.

She went the round with elf-like tread,
  And with kind words of cheer,
Soothing as balm of Gilead,
Laid wild flowers on each patient's bed,
  And made the flowers more dear.

At last she came where Nellie Dean
  Still moaned and tossed about—

"What does the cursed sunlight mean
By shining in upon this scene?
Will no one shut it out?"

And then she swore with rage and pain,
And moaning tried to rise;
It seemed her ugly words must stain
The child who stood with heart astrain,
And large blue listening eyes.

Her fair face did not blush or bleach,
She did not shrink away;
Alas! she was beyond the reach
Of sweet or bitter human speech—
Deaf as the flowers of May.

Only her listening eyes could hear
That hardening in despair,
Which made that other girl, so near
In age to her, a thing to fear
Like fever-tainted air.

She took green boughs of milk-white thorn
  And laid them on the sheet,
Whispering appealingly, "Don't scorn
My flowers! I think, when one's forlorn,
  They're like a message, Sweet."

How heavenly fresh those blossoms smelt,
  Like showers on thirsty ground!
The sick girl frowned as if repelled,
And with hot hands began to pelt
  And fling them all around.

But then some influence seemed to stay
  Her hands with calm control;
Her stormy passion cleared away,
The perfume of the breath of May
  Had passed into her soul.

A nerve of memory had been thrilled,
  And, pushing back her hair,

She stretched out hungry arms half filled
With flower and leaf, and panting shrilled,
  "Where are you, mother, where?"

And then her eyes shone darkly bright
  Through childhood in a mist,
As if she suddenly caught sight
Of some one hidden in the light
  And waited to be kissed.

"Oh, mother dear!" we heard her moan,
  "Have you not gone away?
I dreamed, dear mother, you had gone,
And left me in the world alone,
  In the wild world astray.

"It was a dream; I'm home again!
  I hear the ivy-leaves
Tap-tapping on the leaded pane!
Oh, listen! how the laughing rain
  Runs from our cottage eaves!

"How very sweet the things do smell!
  How bright our pewter shines!
I am at home; I feel so well:
I think I hear the evening bell
  Above our nodding pines.

"The firelight glows upon the brick,
  And pales the rising moon;
And when your needles flash and click,
My heart, my heart, that felt so sick,
  Throbs like a hive in June.

"If only father would not stay
  And gossip o'er his brew;
Then, reeling homewards, lose his way,
Come staggering in at break of day
  And beat you black and blue!

"Yet he can be as good as gold,
  When mindful of the farm,

He tills the field and tends the fold:
But never fear; when I'm grown old
  I'll keep him out of harm.

"And then we'll be as happy here
  As kings upon their throne!
I dreamed you'd left me, mother dear;
That you lay dead this many a year
  Beneath the churchyard stone.

"Mother, I sought you far and wide,
  And ever in my dream,
Just out of reach you seemed to hide;
I ran along the streets and cried,
  'Where are you, mother, where?'

"Through never-ending streets in fear
  I ran and ran forlorn;
And through the twilight yellow-drear
I saw blurred masks of loafers leer,
  And point at me in scorn.

"How tired, how deadly tired, I got;
  I ached through all my bones!
The lamplight grew one quivering blot,
And like one rooted to the spot,
  I dropped upon the stones.

"A hard bed make the stones and cold,
  The mist a wet, wet sheet;
And in the mud, like molten gold,
The snaky lamplight blinking rolled
  Like guineas at my feet.

"Surely there were no mothers when
  A voice hissed in my ear,
'A sovereign! Quick! Come on!'—and then
A knowing leer! There were but men,
  And not a creature near.

"I went—I could not help it. Oh,
  I didn't want to die!

With now a kiss and now a blow,
Strange men would come, strange men would go ;
  I didn't care—not I.

" Sometimes my life was like a tale
  Read in a story-book ;
Our blazing nights turned daylight pale,
Champagne would fizz like ginger-ale,
  Red wine flow like a brook.

" Then like a vane my dream would veer :
  I walked the street again ;
And through the twilight yellow-drear
Blurred clouds of faces seemed to peer,
  And drift across the rain."

She started with a piercing scream
  And wildly rolling eye :
" Ah me ! it was no evil dream
To pass with the first market-team—
  That thing of shame am I.

"Where were you that you could not come?
  Were you so far above—
Far as the moon above a slum?
Yet, mother, you were all the sum
  I had of human love.

"Ah yes! you've sent this branch of May,
  A fair light from the past.
The town is dark—I went astray.
Forgive me, mother! Lead the way;
  I'm going home at last."

In eager haste she tried to rise,
  And struggled up in bed,
With luminous, transfigured eyes,
As if they glassed the opening skies,
  Fell back, sir, and was dead.

## *A MOTHER'S DREAM.*

I.

THE snow was falling thick and fast
On Christmas Eve;
Across the heath the distant blast
Wailed wildly like a soul in grief,
A waste soul or a windy leaf
Whirled round and round without reprieve,
And lost at last.

II.

Lisa woke shivering from her sleep
At break of day,
And felt her flesh begin to creep.

"My child, my child!" she cried; "now may
Our blessed Lord, whose hand doth stay
The wild-fowl on their trackless way,
Thee guard and keep."

III.

"Dreams! dreams!" she to herself did say,
And shook with fright.
"I saw her plainly where I lay
Fly past me like a flash of light;
Fly out into the wintry night,
Out in the snow as snowy white,
Far, far away.

IV.

"Her cage hung empty just above
Your chair, *ma mie;*
Empty as is my heart of love

Since you, my child, dwell far from me—
Dwell in the convent over sea;
All of you left to love Marie,
Your darling dove."

V.

Hark to that fond, familiar coo!
Oh, joy untold!
It falls upon her heart like dew.
There safely perching as of old,
The dove is calling through the cold
And ghastly dawn o'er wood and wold,
"Coo-whoo! Coo-whoo!"

VI.

The snow fell softly, flake by flake,
This Christmas Day,
And whitened every bush and brake;

And o'er the hills so ashen gray
The wind was wailing far away,
Was wailing like a child astray
Whose heart must break.

VII.

"I miss my child," she wailed; "I miss
Her everywhere!
That's why I have such dreams as this.
I miss her step upon the stair,
I miss her laughter in the air,
I miss her bonnie face and hair,
And oh—her kiss!

VIII.

"Christmas! Last Christmas, oh how fleet,
With lark-like trill,
She danced about on fairy feet!

Her eyes clear as a mountain rill,
Where the blue sky is lingering still;
Her rosebud lips the dove would bill
For something sweet.

IX.

"My dove! my dear! my undefiled!
Oh, heavy doom!
My life has left me with the child.
She was a sunbeam in my room,
She was a rainbow on the gloom,
She was the wild rose on a tomb
Where weeds run wild.

X.

"And yet—'tis better thus! 'Tis best,
They tell me so.
Yes, though my heart is like a nest,

Whence all the little birds did go—
An empty nest that's full of snow—
Let me take all the wail and woe,
So she be blest.

XI.

"Let me take all the sin and shame,
And weep for two,
That she may bear no breath of blame.
'Sin—sin!' they say; what sin had you,
Pure as the dawn upon the dew?
Child—robbed of a child's rightful due,
Her father's name.

XII.

"I gave her life to live forlorn!
Oh, let that day
Be darkness wherein I was born!

Let not God light it, let no ray
Shine on it; let it turn away
Its face, because my sin must weigh
Her down with shame.

XIII.

"I? I? Was I the sinner? I,
Not *he*, they say,
Who told me, looking eye in eye,
We'd wed far North where grand and gray
His fair ancestral castle lay,
Amid the woods of Darnaway—
And told a lie.

XIV.

"But I was young; and in my youth
I simply thought
That English gentlemen spoke truth,

Even to a Norman maid, who wrought
The blush-rose shells the tide had brought
To fairy toys which children bought
Before my booth.

XV.

"'Those fairy fingers,' he would say,
'With shell-pink nails,
Shall shame the pearls of Darnaway!'
And in his yacht with swelling sails
We flew before the favouring gales,
Where leagues on leagues his woods and vales
Stretched dim and gray.

XVI.

"Grim rose his castle o'er the wood;
Its hoary halls
Frowned o'er the Findhorn's roaring flood;

Where, winged with spray and water-galls,
The headlong torrent leaps and falls
In thunder through its tunnelled walls,
Streaked as with blood."

XVII.

It all came back in one wild flash
Of cruel light,
And memory smote her like a lash:—
The foolish trust, the fond delight,
The helpless rage, the fevered flight,
The feet that dragged on through the night,
The torrent's splash.

XVIII.

The long, long sickness bred of lies
And lost belief;
The short, sharp pangs and shuddering sighs;

The new-born babe, that in her grief
Bore her wrecked spirit such relief
As the dove-carried olive-leaf
To Noah's eyes.

XIX.

It all came back, and lit her soul
With lurid flame;
How she—she—she—from whom he stole
Her virgin love and honest name—
Must, for the ailing child's sake, tame
Her pride, and take—oh, shame of shame!—
His lordship's dole.

XX.

Like one whom grief hath driven wild,
She cried again,
"My snowdrop shall not be defiled,

Nor catch the faintest soil or stain,
Reared in the shadow of my pain!
How should a guilty mother train
A guiltless child?

XXI.

"You shall be spotless, you!" said she,
"Whate'er my woe;
Even as the snow on yonder lea.
You shall be spotless!" Faint and low,
The wind in dying seemed to blow,
To breathe across the hills of snow,
"Marie! Marie!"

XXII.

A voice was calling far away,
O'er fields and fords,
Across the Channel veiled and gray;

A voice was calling without words,
Touching her nature's deepest chords ;
Drawing her, drawing her as with cords—
She might not stay.

XXIII.

Uprose the sun and still and round,
Shorn of his heat,
Glared bloodshot o'er the frosty ground,
As down the shuttered village street
Fast, fast walked Lisa, and her feet
Left black tracks in earth's winding-sheet
And made no sound.

XXIV.

Then on, on, by the iron way—
With whistling scream—
Piercing hard rocks like potter's clay,

She flashed as in a shifting dream
Through flying town, o'er flowing stream,
Borne on by mighty wings of steam,
Away, away.

XXV.

A sound of wind, and in the air
The sea-gull's screech,
And waves lap-lapping everywhere ;
A rush of ropes and volleyed speech,
And white cliffs sinking out of reach,
Then rising on the rival beach,
Boulogne-sur-Mer.

XXVI.

Above the ramparts on the hill,
Whence like a chart
It saw the low land spreading chill,

Within its cloistered walls apart
The Convent of the Sacred Heart
Rose o'er the noise of street and mart,
Serenely still.

XXVII.

Above the unquiet sea it rose,
A quiet nest,
Severed from earthly wants and woes.
There might the weary find his rest;
There might the pilgrim cease his quest;
There might the soul with guilt oppressed
Implore repose.

XXVIII.

The day was done, the sun dropped low
Behind the mill
That swung within its blood-red glow;

And up the street and up the hill
Lisa walked fast and faster still,
Her sable shadow lengthening chill
Across the snow.

XXIX.

Hark! heavenly clear, with holy swell,
She hears elate
The greeting of the vesper bell,
And, knocking at the convent gate,
Sighs, "Here she prays God early and late;
Walled in from love, walled in from hate;
All's well! All's well!"

XXX.

A sweat broke from her every pore,
And yet she smiled,
As, stumbling through the clanging door,

She faced a nun of aspect mild.
Like some starved wolf's her eyes gleamed wild:
"My child!" she gasped; "I want my child."
And nothing more.

XXXI.

The nun looked at her, shocked to see
The violent sway
Of love's unbridled agony;
And calmly queried on the way,
"Your child, Madame? What child, I pray?"
Still, still the mother could but say,
"Marie! Marie!"

XXXII.

The nun in silence bowed her head,
And then aloud,
"Christ Jesus knows our needs," she said.

"Madame, far from the sinful crowd,
The maiden to the Lord you vowed;
There is no safeguard like a shroud—
Your child is dead.

XXXIII.

"Upon the night Christ saw the light
She passed away,
As snow will when the sun shines bright.
We heard her moaning where she lay,
'Come, mother, come, while yet you may;'
Then like a dove, at break of day,
Her soul took flight."

XXXIV.

As from a blow the mother fell;
No moan made she;
They bore her to the little cell:

There in her coffin lay Marie,
Spotless as snow upon the lea,
Beautiful exceedingly:
All's well! All's well!

## *A CARNIVAL EPISODE.*

NICE, '87.

I.

WE two there together alone in the night,
  Where its shadow unconsciously bound us ;
My beautiful lady all shrouded in white,
She and I looking down from the balcony's height
On the maskers below in the flickering light,
  As they revelled and rioted round us.

II.

Such a rush, such a rage, and a rapture of life
  Such shouts of delight and of laughter,

On the quays that I watched with the General's
wife;
Such a merry-go-reeling of figures was rife,
Turning round to the tune of gay fiddle and fife,
As if never a morning came after.

III.

The houses had emptied themselves in the streets,
Where the maskers bombarded each other
With a shower of confetti and hailstorm of
sweets
Till the pavements were turning the colour of
sheets;
Where a prince will crack jokes with a pauper he
meets,
For the time like a man and a brother.

IV.

The Carnival frolic was now at its height;
The whole population in motion

Stood watching the swift constellations of light
That crackling flashed up on their arrowy flight,
Then spreading their fairy-like fires on the night,
  Fell in luminous rain on the ocean.

V.

And now and again the quick dazzle would flare,
  Glowing red on black masks and white dresses.
We two there together drew back from the glare;
Drew in to the room, and her hood unaware
Fell back from the plaits of her opulent hair,
  That uncoiled the brown snakes of its tresses.

VI.

How fatally fair was my lady, my queen,
  As that wild light fell round her in flashes;
How fatally fair with that mutinous mien,
And those velvety hands all alive with the sheen
Of her rings, and her eyes that were narrowed between
  Heavy lids darkly laced with long lashes!

VII.

Almost I hated her beauty! The air
I was breathing seemed steeped in her presence.
How maddening that waltz was! Ah, how came I there
Alone with that woman so fatally fair,
With the scent of her garments, the smell of her hair,
Passing into my blood like an essence?

VIII.

Her eyes seemed to pluck at the roots of my heart,
And to put all my blood in a fever;
My soul was on fire, my veins seemed to start,
To hold her, to fold her but once to my heart,
I'd have willingly bared my broad chest to the dart,
And been killed, ay, and damned too for ever.

IX.

I forgot, I forgot!—oh, disloyal, abhorred,
With the spell of her eyes on my eyes—
That her husband, the man of all men I adored,
Might be fighting for us at the point of the sword;
Might be killing or killed by an African horde,
Afar beneath African skies.

X.

I forgot—nay, I cared not! What cared I to-night
For aught but my lady, my love,
As she toyed with her mask in the flickering light,
Then suddenly dropped it, perchance, at the sight
Of my passion now reaching its uttermost height,
As a tide with the full moon above!

XI.

Yet I knew, though I loved her so madly, I knew
She was only just playing her game.

She would toy with my heart all the Carnival
through;
She would turn to a traitor a man who was true;
She would drain him of love and then break him
in two,
And wash her white hands of his shame.

XII.

Yet beware, O my beautiful lady, beware!
You must cure me of love or else kill.
That fire burns longest that's slowest to flare:
My love is a force that will force you to care;
Nay, I'll strangle us both in the ropes of your
hair
Should you dream you can drop me at will.

XIII.

And then—how I know not—delirious delight!
Her lips were pressed close upon mine;

My arms clung about her as when in affright
Wrecked men cling to spars in a tempest at night;
So madly I clung to her, crushed her with might
To my heart which her heart made divine.

XIV.

Oh, merciful Heavens! What drove us apart
With a shudder of sundering lives?
Oh, was it the throb of my passionate heart
That made the doors tremble, the windows to start;
Or was it my lady just playing her part,
Most indignant, most outraged of wives?

XV.

She was white as the chalk in the streets—was she fain
To turn on me now with a sneer?

All the blood in my body surged up to my
brain,
And my heart seemed half bursting with passion
and pain,
As I seized her slim hands—but I dropped them
again!
Ah! treason is mother to fear.

XVI.

Had it come upon us at that magical hour,
The judgment of God the Most High?
The floor 'gan to heave and the ceiling to lower,
The dead walls to start with malevolent power,
Till your hair seemed to rise and your spirit to
cower,
As the very stones shook with a sigh.

XVII.

"With you in my arms let the world crack asunder;
Let us die, love, together!" I cried.

Then, then with a clatter and boom as of thunder,
A beam crashed between us and drove us asunder,
And all things rocked round us, above us and under,
Like a boat that is rocked on a tide.

XVIII.

She sprang like a greyhound—no greyhound more fleet—
And ran down the staircase in motion;
And blindly I followed her into the street,
All choked up with people in panic retreat
From the houses that scattered their plaster like sleet
On the crowd in bewildered commotion.

XIX.

Black masks and white dominoes, hale men and dying,
Scared women that shook as with fever

Poor babes in their bedgowns all piteously crying,
Tiles hurled from the housetops—all flying, all
flying,
As I, wild with passion, implored her with sighing
To fly with me now and for ever.

XX.

"Go, go!" and she waved me away as she spoke,
Carried on by the crowd like a feather;
"You forget that it was but a Carnival joke.
Now blest be the terrible earthquake that broke
In between you and me, and has saved at a stroke
Us two in the night there together."

## *THE BATTLE OF FLOWERS.*

I.

THE battle raged, no blood was spilled,
  Though missiles flew in showers;
Hard though they hit, they never killed
  Or maimed the merry throwers:
Or if they killed, those wingèd darts,
They killed but unprotected hearts;
For flowers from flower-like hands can slay
    Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

II.

Like humming-birds upon the breeze
  So swiftly shot the posies;
Glory of red anemones,
  Pink buds of curled-up roses,

Lilacs and lilies of the vale ;
Yea, every flower that scents the gale
Yielded up incense to its day,
Jeanne Ray ! Jeanne Ray !

III.

How gallantly along the course,
Stepping with conscious glances,
Each flower-decked, gaily harnessed horse,
In rank and file advances !
Even as green boughs and daisy-chains
Enwreathe their bits and bridle-reins,
Bright pleasure hides black grief away
Jeanne Ray ! Jeanne Ray !

IV.

The people humming like a hive,
Swarm closely pressed together,
To watch high fashion's crowded drive
With flirt of fan and feather ;

And nosegays thrown up high in air,
Now hitting gray, now golden hair,
Now deftly caught upon their way,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

V.

And past the eager jostling crowd,
Watching their guests from far lands,
Gigs flash by in a violet cloud,
And drags with rose-red garlands;
There meet crowned heads from many zones,
And princes who have lost their thrones,
With gifts from Ind and far Cathay,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

VI.

Ah, who shall bear away the prize
In this bewitching battle,
Where shafts are hurled from brightest eyes,
And Cupid's arrows rattle;

In that fair fight where flowers alone
By fairer flowers are overthrown?
Who shall be victor in this fray?
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

VII.

And people bet with buzz of tongue
As the gay pageant passes;
Now runs a murmur through the throng
And stirs the thrilling masses.
All heads are turned, all necks astrain,
As through the thickening floral rain,
"Look! look! She comes!" you hear them say—
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

VIII.

No turn-out in that festive throng
Is half so bright and airy;
Your cream-white ponies prance along
As if they drew a fairy;

They step along with heads held high,
And favours blue to match the sky:
They know theirs is the winning way,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

IX.

A queen in exile might you be,
Or leader of the fashion?
Some Jenny Lind from over sea
Melting all hearts with passion?
Some tragic Muse whose mighty spell
Unlocks the gates of heaven and hell?
What sceptre is it that you sway?
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

X.

All by yourself in spotless white,
You sit there in your glory;
Your black eyes scintillate with light—
Eyes that may hide a story.

In spotless white with ribbons blue,
You look fresh from a bath of dew
That sparkles in the rising day,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XI.

Triumphant—without shame or fear—
You air a thousand graces;
Though women turn when you appear
With cold, averted faces;
Though men at sight of you will stop,
As if they looked into a shop;
Shall both for this not doubly pay?
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XII.

And with a smile upon your lips,
Perhaps a shade too rosy,
You shake two dainty finger-tips
And lightly fling a posy:

So might a high-born dame perchance,
In days of tourneys and romance,
Have flung her glove into the fray,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XIII.

As with that little careless sign
You fling your bouquet lightly,
Three graybeards, flushing as with wine,
Lift hats and bow politely;
And one, the grandest of the three,
Stoops low with stiff, rheumatic knee;
Out of the dust he picks your spray,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XIV.

His coat is all ablaze with stars
For deeds of martial daring;
His name, a watchword in the wars,
Kept soldiers from despairing.

Now see beside his orders rare
Your mignonette and maidenhair;
With just a nod you turn away,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XV.

You turn to meet the wintry face
Of an old beggar-woman,
Just there beyond the railed-in space,
Brown, bony, hardly human;
Who in her tatters seems at least
The skeleton of Egypt's feast;
A ghastly emblem of decay,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XVI.

With palsied head and shaking hand,
As if it were December,
Grim by the barrier see her stand,
Just mumbling a "Remember!

Remember in thy days of lust,
That fairest flesh must come to dust;
Then have some pity while you may,"
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XVII.

Why do you shiver at her glance,
As if the wind blew chilly?
Why does your rosy countenance
Turn pale as any lily?
The sun is warm, the sky is bright,
The sea dissolving into light
Breaks into blossom-bells of spray;
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XVIII.

Ah, could some instinct in your breast
Reveal that beggar's story,
Would not your gay life lose its zest,
Your empire lose its glory?

Or would you only care to waste
Life's bounty in yet hotter haste?
For is the world not beauty's prey?
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XIX.

Alighting at the beggar's feet,
A bright Napoleon flashes!
Then gaily through the dust and heat
Your light Victoria dashes.
Again your face is rosy clear,
As with a loud and ringing cheer
They hail you winner of the day,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XX.

And gloriously at set of sun,
In triumph now departing,
The golden prize your flowers have won
Leaves rival bosoms smarting.

How many deem you half divine,
Where amid bouquets you recline—
Proud beauty in the devil's pay,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

XXI.

Down, down beneath the rolling wheels,
The flowers, so fresh this morning,
Lie trampled under careless heels,
Vile stuff for all men's scorning.
The roses crushed, the lilies soiled,
The violets of their sweets despoiled,
In dusty heaps defile your way,
Jeanne Ray! Jeanne Ray!

# *THE SONG OF THE WILLI.*

According to a widespread Hungarian superstition—showing the ingrained national passion for dancing—the Willi or Willis were the spirits of young affianced girls who, dying before marriage, could not rest in their graves. It was popularly believed that these phantoms would nightly haunt lonely heaths in the neighbourhood of their native villages till the disconsolate lovers came as if drawn by a magnetic charm. On their appearance the Willi would dance with them without intermission till they dropped dead from exhaustion.

I.

THE wild wind is whistling o'er moorland and heather,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
I rise from my bed, and my bed has no feather,
Heigh-ho!
My bed is deep down in the brown sullen mould,
My head is laid low on the clod;
So wormy the sheets, and the pillow so cold,
Of clammy and moist clinging sod.

II.

The lone livid moon rides alone high in heaven,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
The stars' cutting glitter their dull shrouds hath riven,
Heigh-ho!
I rise and I glide out far into the night,
A shadow so swift and so still;
Bleak, bleak is the moonshine all ghastly and white,
The dank morass drinketh its fill.

III.

And down in yon valley in wan vapour shrinking,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
The bare moated town cowers fitfully blinking,
Heigh-ho!
There, warm under shelter, the fire burning bright,
My lover sleeps sound in his bed;

But I flit alone in the pitiless night,
Unpitied, unloved, and unwed.

IV.

And hast thou forgotten the deep troth we plighted?
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
Too warm was thy love by cold death to be blighted,
Heigh-ho!
My sweetheart! and mind'st thou that this is the night,
The night that we should have been wed?
And while I flit restless, a low wailing sprite,
Ah, say, canst thou sleep in thy bed?

V.

A week, but a week, and a wreath of gay flowers,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

I wore as I vied with the fleet-footed hours,
Heigh-ho!
As I vied with the hours in dancing them down
Till the stars reeled low in the sky,
And sweet came thy whispers as rose-leaves when blown
About in the breeze of July.

VI.

"Thou'rt light, O my chosen; a bird is not lighter,
O love, my love!
I'd dance into death with thee; death would be brighter,
My love!"
And they struck up a wild and a wonderful measure;
Quick, quick beat our hearts to the tune;
Quick, quick the feet flew in a frenzy of pleasure,
To the sound of the fife and bassoon.

VII.

On, on whirled the pairs on the swift music driven,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
Like gossamer vapours afloat in high heaven,
Heigh-ho!
Like gossamer vapours, in silence they fled,
With a shifting of face into face;
But fleeter than all the fleet dancers we sped
In the rush of the rapturous race.

VIII.

How often turned Wanda, the slim, lily-throated,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
And gazed at us wistful as onward we floated,
Heigh-ho!
And Bilba, the swarthy, whose eyes had the trick
Of a stag's, with a glitter of steel;
She lifted her lashes, so long and so thick,
To stare at my true love and leal.

IX.

But he, he saw none o' them, brown-faced or rosy,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
Tho' maidens bloomed bright like a fresh-gathered posy,
Heigh-ho!
For his eyes that shone black as the sloes of the hedges,
They shone like two stars over me;
And his breath, thrilling o'er me as wind over sedges,
Stirred my hair till I tingled with glee.

X.

Now slow as two down-bosomed swans, we were sliding,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
O'er the low heaving swell of the silver sounds gliding,
Heigh-ho!

Now hollowly booming drums rumbled apace,
Flashed sharp clatt'ring cymbals around,
And swung like loose leaves in a stormy embrace
We whirled in a tumult of sound.

XI.

But pallid our cheeks grew, late flushing with pleasure,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
As slowly away swooned the languishing measure,
Heigh-ho!
For shrill crew the cock as the sun 'gan to rise,
And it rang from afar like a knell;
Our kisses grew bitter and sweet grew our sighs,
As sadly we murmured, "Farewell!"

XII.

High up in the chambers the maidens together,
O love, my love!

Were piling bleached linen as white as swan's feather
My love!
Were weaving and spinning and singing aloud,
While broidering my bride-veil of lace;
But the three fatal sisters they wove me my shroud,
And death kissed me cold on the face.

XIII.

The wild wind is whistling o'er moorland and heather,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
I rise from my bed, and my bed has no feather,
Heigh-ho!
The snow driveth grisly and ghostly, and gleams
In the glare of the moon's chilly glance;
What pale flitting phantoms aroused by her beams,
Are circling in shadowy dance!

XIV.

Mayhap ye were maidens death plucked in your flower,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
As clustering you glowed in love's murmuring bower,
Heigh-ho!
Who, delirious for life from the gloom of your graves,
Are driven to wander with me,
And you rise from your tombs like the white-crested waves
From the depths of the dolorous sea.

XV.

Ah, maidens, pale maidens, o'er moorland and heather,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
The bridegroom is coming athwart the wild weather,
Heigh-ho!

Full shines the fair moon on his beautiful face,
He walketh like one in a trance ;
Nay, is running like one who is running a race
Against death, with his dead bride to dance.

XVI.

At the sound of thy footfall my numb heart is shaken,
O love, my love!
Once again all its pulses to new life awaken,
My love!
It leaps like a stag that is borne as on wings
To the brooks thawing thick through the noon,
Like a lark from the glebe, like a lily that springs
From its bier to the bosom of June.

XVII.

"I hold thee, I hold thee, I drink thy caresses,
O love, my love!"

Round thy face, round thy throat, I roll my dank tresses,
My love!
"I hold thee, I hold thee! Eight nights, wan and weeping,"
I wandered loud sobbing thy name!
"Thy lips are as cold as the snowdrift a-sweeping;"
But thy breath soon shall fan them to flame!

XVIII.

Blow up for the dance now o'er moorland and heather!
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
Blow, blow you wild winds, while we two dance together,
Heigh-ho!
Till the clouds dance above with tempestuous embraces
Of maidenly moonbeams in flight;
In the silvery rear of whose fugitive traces
Reel the stars through the revelling night!

XIX.

"Cocks crow, and the breath on thy sweet lip is failing,
O love, my love!"
Stars swoon, and the flame in thy dark eye is quailing,
My love!
"Oh, brighter the night than the fires of the day"
When thine eyes shine as stars over me!
"Oh, sweeter thy grave than the soft breath of May!"
Then down, Love, to death, but with thee.

## *SCHERZO.*

Oh, beloved, come and bring
All the flowery wealth of spring!
Though the leaf be in the sere,
Icy winter creeping near;
Though the trees like mourners all
Standing at a funeral,
Black against the pallid air
Toss their wild arms in despair,
With their bald heads sadly bowed
O'er dead summer in her shroud.
Yea, though golden days be o'er,
If you enter at my door,
Spring, dear spring, will come once more.
There will break upon the night

That glad flash of dewy light
Which, like young love in a pet,
Once with sunny tears would wet
Many a wild-wood violet;
And the hyacinth will arise
In the April of your eyes.
Blossoms of the apple tree?
Rarer blossoms bloom for me
In the cunning white and red,
Most felicitously wed,
On your cheek. And then your brow—
Can a snow-white cherry-bough
Match its bland, unsullied hue,
Where, like threads of silky blue,
Little veins show here and there
Through broad temples where your hair,
Clustering, hangs a tender brown
Softer than the fluffy down
Which before the leaf in March
Beards the lime tree and the larch?

Shall I grieve because the rose,
The red rose, no longer blows,
Since all roses you eclipse
With the roses of your lips?
And what matter, O my sweet,
Though the genial light and heat
Have departed for a while!
Only let me see you smile,
Let me see that dulcet curve
Like a dimpling wavelet swerve
Round the coral of your mouth,
And the North will change to South:
To the happy South, whose clear
Light o'er-brimming atmosphere,
Flowing in at every pore,
Sets life glowing to the core.
You are light and life in sooth,
Fair as was that Grecian youth
Who in her cold sphere above
Drove poor Dian mad with love—

When she saw him where he lay,
White and golden like a spray
Of tall jonquils whose intense
Sweetness faints upon the sense;
When she saw him swathed in light,
Couched on the aërial height
Of hoar Latmos, hushed and warm;
While, to shield him from all harm,
Like a woman's rounded arm,
A fresh creeper wildly fair
Twined around his throat and hair.
And the goddess clean forgot
Her fair fame without a blot,
And untarnished reputation,
Free from faintest imputation
Of such frailties as the fair
Dwellers in Elysian air
Find recorded to their shame,
Chronicled with date and name,
In the annals of the skies.

She forgot in her surprise,
When her empyrean eyes
Saw Endymion where he lay
Slumbering, and she cast away
Her immortal honour, clear
As her own unclouded sphere,
For the palpitating bliss
Of a surreptitious kiss.

Oh, beloved, come and bring
All the flowery wealth of spring—
All its blossoms, buds, and bells,
And wind-coaxing violet smells—
All its miracle of grace
In the blossom of your face.

# LYRICS.

## *LOVE'S SOMNAMBULIST.*

LIKE some wild sleeper who alone at night
Walks with unseeing eyes along a height,
  With death below and only stars above;
I, in broad daylight, walk as if in sleep,
Along the edges of life's perilous steep,
  The lost somnambulist of love.

I, in broad day, go walking in a dream,
Led on in safety by the starry gleam
  Of thy blue eyes that hold my heart in thrall;
Let no one wake me rudely, lest one day,
Startled to find how far I've gone astray,
  I dash my life out in my fall.

## *A MEETING.*

A TWILIGHT glow diffused on high
  Flushed all the autumn land beneath ;
Like love that lights your azure eye,
  The pond's blue goblet on the heath
    Was brimful of the sky.

We met by chance, and heaven's rich hue
  Leaped to your face in rosy flame ;
Ah, is it possible you knew
  The wild delight that filled my frame
    As I caught sight of you ?

Ah, is it possible, my love,
  That your delight can equal mine?
Nay, then, the burning sky above
  Grows pale beside this bliss divine,
    And the deep glow thereof.

## *YOUR FACE.*

I TOOK your face into my dreams,
It floated round me like a light ;
Your beauty's consecrating beams
Lay mirrored in my heart all night.
As in a lonely mountain mere,
Unvisited of any streams,
Supremely bright and still and clear,
The solitary moonlight gleams,
Your face was shining in my dreams.

## *ONLY A SMILE.*

No butterfly whose frugal fare
  Is breath of heliotrope and clove,
And other trifles light as air,
  Could live on less than doth my love.

That childlike smile that comes and goes
  About your gracious lips and eyes,
Hath all the sweetness of the rose,
  Which feeds the freckled butterflies.

I feed my love on smiles, and yet
  Sometimes I ask, with tears of woe,
How had it been if we had met,
  If you had met me long ago,

Before the fast, defacing years
  Had made all ill that once was well?
Ah, then your smiling breeds such tears
  As Tantalus may weep in hell.

## *SOMETIMES I WONDER.*

SOMETIMES I wonder if you guess
The deep impassioned tenderness
  Which overflows my heart;
The love I never dare confess;
Yet hard, yea, harder to repress
  Than tears too fain to start.

Sometimes I ponder, O my sweet,
The things I'll tell you when we meet;
  But straightway at your sight
My heart's blood oozes to my feet
Like thawing waters in the heat,
  Confused with too much light.

I hardly know, when you are near,
If it is love, or joy, or fear
  Which fills my languid frame ;
Enveloped in your atmosphere,
My dark self seems to disappear,
  A moth entombed in flame.

## *MANY WILL LOVE YOU.*

MANY will love you ; you were made for love ;
For the soft plumage of the unruffled dove
  Is not so soft as your caressing eyes.
You will love many ; for the winds that veer
Are not more prone to shift their compass, dear,
  Than your quick fancy flies.

Many will love you ; but I may not, no ;
Even though your smile sets all my life aglow,
  And at your fairness all my senses ache.
You will love many ; but not me, my dear,
Who have no gift to give you but a tear
  Sweet for your sweetness' sake.

## *A DREAM.*

ONLY a dream, a beautiful baseless dream ;
Only a bright
Flash from your eyes, a brief electrical gleam,
Charged with delight.

Only a waking, alone, in the moon's last gleam
Fading from sight ;
Only a flooding of tears that shudder and stream
Fast through the night.

## *ROSE D'AMOUR.*

I PLANTED a rose tree in my garden,
  In early days when the year was young ;
I thought it would bear me roses, roses,
  While nights were dewy and days were long.

It bore but once, and a white rose only—
  A lovely rose with petals of light ;
Like the moon in heaven, supreme and lonely ;
  And the lightning struck it one summer night.

## *SONNET.*

EVEN as on some black background full of night,
  And hollow storm in cloudy disarray,
  The forceful brush of some great master may
More brilliantly evoke a higher light;
So beautiful, so delicately white,
  So like a very metaphor of May,
  Your loveliness on my life's sombre gray
In its perfection stands out doubly bright.

And yet your beauty breeds a strange despair,
  And pang of yearning in the helpless heart,
To shield you from time's fraying wear and tear
  That from yourself yourself would wrench apart;
How save you, fairest, but to set you where
  Mortality kills death in deathless art?

## *A PARTING.*

THE year is on the wing, my love,
  With tearful days and nights ;
The clouds are on the wing above
  With gathering swallow-flights.

The year is on the wing, my sweet,
  And in the ghostly race,
With patter of unnumbered feet,
  The dead leaves fly apace.

The year is on the wing, and shakes
  The last rose from its tree ;
And I, whose heart in parting breaks,
  Must bid adieu to thee.

## *MY LADY.*

LIKE putting forth upon a sea
  On which the moonbeams shimmer,
Where reefs and unknown perils be
To wreck, yea, wreck one utterly,
It were to love you, lady fair,
In whose black braids of billowy hair
  The misty moonstones glimmer.

Oh, misty moonstone-coloured eyes,
  Latticed behind long lashes,
Within whose clouded orbs there lies,
Like lightning in the sleeping skies,

A spark to kindle and ignite,
And set a fire of love alight
  To burn one's heart to ashes.

I will not put forth on this deep
  Of perilous emotion ;
No, though your hands be soft as sleep,
They shall not have my heart to keep,
Nor draw it to your fatal sphere.
Lady, you are as much to fear
  As is the fickle ocean.

## *ON A VIOLA D'AMORE.*

CARVED WITH A CUPID'S HEAD, AND PLAYED ON FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER MORE THAN A CENTURY.

WHAT fairy music clear and light,
  Responsive to your fingers,
Swells rippling on the summer night,
  And amorously lingers
Upon the sense, as long ago
In days of rouge and rococo!

A century of silence lay
  On strings that had not spoken
Since powdered lords to ladies gay
  Gave, for a lover's token,

Fans glowing fresh from Watteau's art,
Well worth a marchioness's heart.

Your dormant music tranced and bound
  Was like the Sleeping Beauty
Prince Charming in the forest found,
  And kissed in loyal duty:
And when she woke her eyes' blue fire
Turned the dumb forest to a lyre.

Thus Amor with the bandaged eyes,
  Fit symbol of hushed numbers,
Most musically wakes and sighs
  After an age of slumbers:
Beneath your magic bow's control
The Viol has regained her soul.

## *A CHILD'S FANCY.*

"HUSH, hush! Speak softly, Mother dear,
So that the daisies may not hear;
For when the stars begin to peep,
The pretty daisies go to sleep.

"See, Mother, round us on the lawn;
With soft white lashes closely drawn,
They've shut their eyes so golden-gay,
That looked up through the long, long day.

"But now they're tired of all the fun—
Of bees and birds, of wind and sun
Playing their game at hide-and-seek;—
Then very softly let us speak."

A myriad stars above the child
Looked down from heaven and sweetly smiled ;
But not a star in all the skies
Beamed on him with his Mother's eyes.

She stroked his curly chestnut head,
And whispering very softly, said,
"I'd quite forgotten they might hear ;
Thank you for that reminder, dear."

## LASSITUDE.

I LAID me down beside the sea,
Endless in blue monotony;
The clouds were anchored in the sky,
Sometimes a sail went idling by.

Upon the shingles on the beach
Gray linen was spread out to bleach,
And gently with a gentle swell
The languid ripples rose and fell.

A fisher-boy, in level line,
Cast stone by stone into the brine:
Methought I too might do as he,
And cast my sorrows on the sea.

The old, old sorrows in a heap
Dropped heavily into the deep ;
But with its sorrow on that day
My heart itself was cast away.

## *SEEKING.*

In many a shape and fleeting apparition,
Sublime in age or with clear morning eyes,
Ever I seek thee, tantalizing Vision,
Which beckoning flies.

Ever I seek Thee, O evasive Presence,
Which on the far horizon's utmost verge,
Like some wild star in luminous evanescence,
Shoots o'er the surge.

Ever I seek Thy features ever flying,
Which ne'er beheld I never can forget:
Lightning which flames through love, and mimics dying
In souls that set.

Ever I seek Thee through all clouds of error;
As when the moon behind earth's shadow slips,
She wears a momentary mask of terror
In brief eclipse.

Ever I seek Thee, passionately yearning;
Like altar-fire on some forgotten fane,
My life flames up irrevocably burning,
And burnt in vain.

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> 'Crowding on the decks with hungry eyes,
> Straining toward the coast that flies and flies,'

those among them driven into exile look on the shores to which many bid an eternal farewell. Both as a narrative and descriptive poem 'The Heather on Fire' is equally remarkable."—*Morning Post*, July 30, 1886.

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pause and recognize the care and art which have contributed to this triumphant result; to turn back . . . and dwell on the author's extraordinary knowledge of the human heart—extraordinary alike for its depth and its range. As for the wit and humour with which the book is freely sprinkled, the poetic and artistic spirit which pervades it thoughout, they can only be appreciated on a second or a third perusal."—*Life*, December 25, 1884.

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